

The Exchange

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs



-Special Edition-

RESPONDING TO THE ASIAN TSUNAMIS

ECA Exchange Participants, Alumni, Grantee Organizations and Program Partners Extend Hearts and Helping Hands



Artwork by an ECA School Connectivity student from School No.1 in Uzbekistan

On December 26, 2004, the sheer ferocity of nature reminded the world of the relative fragility of humankind. Off the west coast of Northern Sumatra, the most powerful earthquake in 40 years triggered massive tsunamis that devastated countries throughout South and Southeast Asia as well as Somalia, Tanzania and Kenya in East Africa. Over 200,000 people in eight countries perished in a few hours and over 100,000 people were missing, while many more had their homes and livelihoods swept away. The coastal areas of Indonesia and Sri Lanka and two Indian island chains bore the brunt of the calamity.

The magnitude of this disaster touched people worldwide and prompted the United States along with dozens of other countries and millions of citizens around the world to engage in one of the largest humanitarian efforts in history. President Bush pledged

\$950 million in long-term U.S. support to help the victims rebuild their lives with long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation. Non-governmental organizations sent hundreds of assistance workers to the affected region. The United States has donated over \$1.2 billion in aid between the general public and corporate businesses. Thanks to extensive fundraising efforts by former presidents and co-chairs of the U.S. Private Sector Tsunami Relief, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, students from the region may apply for 75 Fulbright scholarships to attend Texas A&M University and the University of Arkansas, to study a range of subjects to bolster their work in rebuilding their countries. Marking the six-month anniversary of the disaster in late June 2005, U.S. officials in Washington, DC publicly described the progress of reconstruction, noting how impressively the affected governments and communities have undertaken complicated assessments and ambitious plans to rebuild, which are enormous challenges for these countries in dealing with a tragedy of this scale.

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)-sponsored students, scholars, exchange program alumni, and current exchange participants, as well as ECA program partners and grantee institutions were among the private citizens,

entertainers, charitable and religious organizations, and corporations who provided tsunami relief funds and other compassionate measures. Also engaged in the response were hundreds of students from the affected countries who were studying in the United States when the disaster struck.

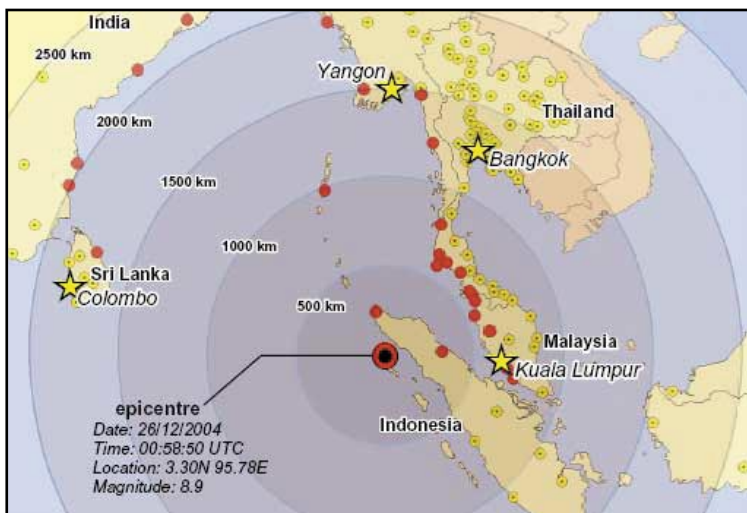


Illustration of the Tsunami's Range and Impact

Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs -

www.reliefweb.int

This edition of *The Exchange* relates the stories of some of those dedicated volunteers and others affiliated with ECA who gave so generously of their time, thoughts, and resources. Whether fundraising in the United States and Korea, comforting displaced children in India, burying the dead in Sri Lanka, delivering relief packages to orphans or supporting USAID response teams in Indonesia, expressing solidarity through art in Uzbekistan and Arizona, or learning about tsunami warning and disaster response systems in Hawaii and Los Angeles — these men, women, and children have provided solace and hope, as well as ongoing efforts to ensure greater safety in the face of future natural disasters.

PRESIDENT BUSH THANKS NGOS, INCLUDING ECA GRANTEES, FOR “LOVE AND COMPASSION AND HELP”



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Department of State

President Bush thanks NGO leaders, including those of two ECA grantees, Catholic Relief Services and Relief International-Schools Online, for their humanitarian relief efforts for victims of the Asian tsunamis, USAID headquarters, January 10, 2005.

On January 10, 2005, President George W. Bush met in Washington, DC, with the heads of several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in tsunami disaster relief efforts. He acknowledged in particular those organizations that were working in the region prior to the tsunami disaster and shifted their efforts to humanitarian relief. Two of those organizations, Catholic Relief Services and Relief International-Schools Online, are ECA grantees that sponsor School Connectivity programs in Southeast Europe, Tajikistan, Bangladesh, Syria, and the West Bank and Gaza. President Bush said, “There is no question in my mind that the NGOs of America provide such vital, vital help in times of disaster.” [For the President’s full remarks, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050110-6.html>.]

“CHARLOTTE CARES” AS SHOWN BY INTERNATIONAL HOUSE FUNDRAISER



Photo Courtesy of Rachel Lynch

Laotian dancers perform at the International House-sponsored “Charlotte Cares” Tsunami - Earthquake Emergency Response

The National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) is a network of nonprofit program agencies and 93 community-based organizations across the United States that design and implement professional programs and provide cultural activities and home hospitality opportunities for foreign leaders, specialists, and international scholars, including participants in the U.S. Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program and other exchanges. NCIV member citizen diplomats foster international understanding and cooperation, constructive economic connections, and peaceful interaction. International House, an NCIV member in Charlotte, North Carolina, responded to the December 2004 tsunami disaster and spurred many area organizations to help meet both the immediate and long-term

needs of people in affected countries. International House staff rapidly coordinated a fundraising event, enlisting community volunteers to perform ethnic dance and music, representing cultures from the affected countries as well as those of other local international groups. Held in Dana Auditorium at Queens University, the program included moments of prayer for the victims and their families. Demonstrating the community’s solidarity with the people of Southeast Asia and parts of Africa, this effort also highlighted the growing international diversity in the region by bringing together many diverse organizations and individual volunteers who ensured its success. The proceeds exceeded \$25,000 and went directly to the American Red Cross.

“Our response to the unprecedented tragedy reflects the fact that Americans worldwide were deeply moved by the images we all saw in the days and weeks following the disaster. Collectively, the American people, the Bush Administration and Congress came together to pledge and are now delivering immediate and long-term assistance... Public sector contributions have been significant. Private sector contributions, some still coming in, have exceeded public contributions by over two-to-one.”

— U.S. Ambassador Doug Hartwick, Coordinator of the Tsunami Reconstruction Task Force, at a Department of State press briefing held June 23, 2005, to mark the six-month anniversary of the Asian tsunamis.

FULBRIGHTERS IN SOUTH ASIA FOCUS ON COMMUNITY SERVICE



Fulbrighters, alumni, and program staff from Washington, DC and New York plant trees at the Indian Institute of Management in Kozhikode, as part of the Mid-Year Conference "Fulbright and Community Service," January 2005.

The United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI) organized a three-day conference for 130 Fulbrighters in South Asia and others in the Fulbright community at the Indian Institute of Management in Kozhikode (IIMK) in mid-January. The conference theme — decided well before the tsunami struck — was "Fulbright and Community Service." The participants brainstormed on how to best channel their energies, resources and expertise toward community service and fundraising. They also planted trees and visited schools, colleges, places of worship, a health-related NGO, and a poultry farm. The Fulbrighters publicly observed a two-minute silence for the tsunami victims. A U.S. student spoke to the group about her recent volunteer work in Tamil Nadu and showed photos of the devastation and the children whom she had befriended at a shelter for tsunami victims.

U.S. FULBRIGHTERS VOLUNTEER FOR RELIEF WORK, CONTRIBUTE TO TSUNAMI WARNING RESEARCH

Many American Fulbright Scholars in Sri Lanka have been personally involved in relief and rehabilitation work and research since the tsunami disaster. Many scholars have worked round-the-clock, donating their time, funds, expertise and energy to contribute to the massive relief and reconstruction effort, as well as the development and enhancement of warning systems.

"The most valuable work I did was play games and bring smiles to the faces of children at these camps."

U.S. Fulbright scholar Tod Bruning, for example, with his background in IT networking projects, was directly involved in developing a national volunteer registration system for Sri Lanka at Sri Lanka's Bandaranaike International Airport. The system, VolunteerSriLanka.org (VSL), puts volunteers entering the country into a skills database to match their skills with those needed by NGOs.

Samir Shah, a U.S. Fulbrighter researching "Vernacular Architecture of Sri Lanka" at the University of Moratuwa, has embodied the Fulbright Program's spirit of cultural understanding by spearheading the rebuilding of a small Muslim village in remote southwestern Sri Lanka. Shah

partnered with a group of local architects to design the town plan and to gain its approval by the local Urban Development Authority and the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's office. He also is working with Architecture for Humanity, an American NGO, to fund the project and has helped raise more than \$250,000. The rebuilding begins in July 2005.

Immediately after the tsunami hit the coastal areas in India, U.S. Fulbright student Seema Shah went to work with an NGO in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu - one of the worst affected areas in the country - where she helped coordinate the more than 100 NGOs working in the area. She also interacted with the women and children at three temporary camps. "The most valuable work I did was play games and bring smiles to the faces of children at these camps," Shah notes. Her effort highlights the fact that the Fulbright Program represents more than scholarly achievements. At the Fulbright mid-year conference in Kerala, Shah apprised the Fulbright community about the opportunities to work on behalf of tsunami victims.

Dr. Stephen Perry, Senior Fulbright Lecturer and Researcher at the University of Mauritius, announced at a press conference April 13, 2005, the findings of his research on the Mauritian response to the tsunami disaster. Local television station MBC-TV aired an interview with Dr. Perry. Recognizing the value of his data to its project to develop an early tsunami warning system, the government of Mauritius has awarded to Dr. Perry a grant for further research on the topic.

YES STUDENTS RAISE TSUNAMIS RELIEF FUNDS IN THEIR U.S. HOST COMMUNITIES



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Department of State

Kaoutar, a Youth Exchange and Study (YES) participant from Morocco, creates clay products to be sold in her Oregon host community to raise money for the victims of the Asian tsunamis, January 2005.

Many international students who were living and studying in the United States when the Asian tsunamis disaster struck were profoundly moved by its impact. In some cases, that impact was very personal, affecting the student's own family and countrymen. Lokeswari and Fadilah, both participants from Indonesia in ECA's Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program, helped with tsunami relief fundraising efforts in their U.S. host communities. In Pennsylvania, Lokeswari raised more than \$5000 and in Indiana, Fadilah collected \$700 in only four days.

Kaoutar, a 17-year-old YES program participant from Morocco attending high school in Oregon, donated \$100 to the Red Cross. She also made clay products to sell in her host community and organized a car wash to collect donations for tsunamis victim relief. On June 13, 2005, President George W. Bush addressed Kaoutar and other YES students who were assembled in The White House Rose Garden as part of a program in Washington, DC to conclude their exchange experience. Praising the YES students for their contributions of community service in their host communities across America, President Bush acknowledged Kaoutar by name, citing her volunteer work in Oregon.

Reflections From



Artwork by Yuzbashev, 10th

Right: Secretary Rice hugs a Thai school girl who led a group singing for her at Bang Sak school, which was devastated by the December 2004 tsunami and was rebuilt as part of the U.S. reconstruction efforts in Pang-nga province, southern Thailand, July 11, 2005.



AP/Wide World Photo

... I'm very glad that together with the Thai Government and with the United States and with the wonderful people of this area, that we have been able to help to rebuild this school... The tsunami and the devastation that it caused touched the hearts of so many people around the world. And I know that we have here students from the United States who are helping and who perhaps had never thought that they might be in Thailand, but find themselves here out of their hearts... Thailand and the United States have long been very, very good friends and I'm only happy that we could build on our platform of our friendship to be here in the time of need. And you can be sure that we will continue the efforts to rebuild after the tsunami and I look forward to coming back and I also look forward to seeing some of these wonderful children in universities one day because of the great work that is being done here.

— Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, during her visit to Takuapa, Thailand, for a Tsunami Reconstruction Program at Bang Sak School, July 11, 2005

SCHOOL CONNECTIVITY STUDENTS CREATE ART IN “SOLIDARITY WITH THE TSUNAMI’S CHILD VICTIMS”

As part of the ECA School Connectivity Asian Tsunami Disaster Resources project, administered by the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), students in partner schools in Uzbekistan and the United States contributed original paintings, drawings, and computer-designed artwork to the online art exhibit “Solidarity with the Tsunami’s Child Victims” at <http://sc.irex.uz/gallery/index.php?cat=35>. The artworks, including one featured on the cover of this newsletter and four shown on these pages, were printed and distributed to the embassies of India, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

The members of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board mourn the enormous loss engendered by the tsunami disaster. While there were no current Fulbrighters who died...some Fulbright grantees from the region have suffered the loss of family members. We mourn the loss of some Fulbright alumni and members of their families. Throughout the world, Fulbright alumni also are coming together to fundraise, share their many talents, and help in whatever ways they can.

— Steven J. Uhlfelder, Chair, J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, excerpted from his message of condolence following the tsunami disaster.

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES SHARE THEIR STORIES

The following selected newspaper excerpts relate the perspectives and actions of foreign students studying in the United States when the tsunamis struck their countries.

The Daily Oklahoman (February 5, 2005, by Chris Schutz)

Kenah Nyanat, 20, a junior petroleum engineer major and Malaysian president of a student group at the University of Oklahoma, organized fundraising booths on the campus. "Students from the three hardest-hit countries – Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India – have recommended sending the money raised to three charitable organizations in those countries. 'A lot of them feel glad to be here and alive,' Nyanat said. 'They want to try and help the ones who are back home.'...Nyanat's friends from Oklahoma (home for the holidays) 'kept emailing to see if I was OK. I told them I was safe.'"

Hundreds of students from 9 of the affected countries were studying in the U.S. at the time of the disaster, including 297 students participating in the Youth Exchange & Study, Fulbright, Humphrey Fellowship and Burma Refugee Scholarship programs. The students were from:

Bangladesh	29	Malaysia	21
Burma	15	Sri Lanka	13
India	65	Tanzania	10
Indonesia	98	Thailand	30
Kenya	16		

from The Heart



grade, School 93 in Uzbekistan

The Wichita Eagle (March 15, 2005, by Katherine Leal Unmuth)

Damitha Abeywardana from hard-hit Galle in Sri Lanka is one of many students whose family's livelihood was destroyed or severely damaged by the tsunami. "Abeywardana (studying aerospace engineering) and a dozen other Wichita State University students from countries struck by the tsunami in December are worried that the financial strain on their families will threaten their dreams of obtaining an American diploma. He said, 'It's pretty hard, actually. Our parents are not able to send money.'" Like many U.S. universities, WSU has set up a fund to help tsunami-affected foreign students pay their tuition.

The Seattle Times (January 24, 2005, by Hal Bernton)

Sylvia Agustina planned to come back home to Indonesia in early December, as soon as she finished her University of Washington master's thesis on riverfront redevelopment ... an instructor asked her to put in more work on her final paper. So she postponed her homecoming until early January. When Agustina returned to Indonesia in the first week in January she put her talents and energy into volunteering in the relief effort even as she struggled to find time to mourn her huge personal losses... her mother, father and dozens of relatives and friends... She is eager to consult with survivors on how best to rebuild the city and help make sure their voice is heard as the Indonesian government and international agencies form plans... She says "We try to get busy to help those who have survived. Because if we don't get busy, then we start to break down."



Artwork by student from School No. 1 in Uzbekistan



Artwork by Elena, 11th grade, School No. 12 in Uzbekistan



Artwork by Caitlyn, 6th grade, Franklin Phonetic Primary School in Arizona

FORMER INTERNATIONAL VISITOR CLEARS WRECKAGE, COMFORTS VICTIMS AND WORKS TO 'CHANGE FATE OF THE DISPLACED' IN SRI LANKA

A 2004 ECA International Visitor, Venerable Baddegama Samitha of Sri Lanka, has worked in the thick of his country's devastation following the tsunami. Venerable Samitha, who is a Buddhist Monk, is President of the Sri Saranankara Development Foundation based in Baddegama, Sri Lanka. His organization advocated for and served those people who were displaced from their homes and collected donations of crucial supplies and services to assist on a long-term basis.

Venerable Samitha described the conditions his team found, "In the history of humanity this is the biggest disaster that I have seen and experienced. Children, men and woman were killed in thousands and injured in millions. Dead bodies were cleared and buried with our own hands and the injured were taken to the nearest hospital. We will have to make a special effort to change the fate of the displaced..."



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Department of State



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Department of State

Above: Former International Visitor Venerable Baddegama Samitha works alongside a soldier to clear the destruction amidst a tsunami-caused train wreck at Talwatta that killed over two thousand travelers; Left: Venerable Samitha visits a Center for the Displaced where he comforts women and children who share their horrific stories with him.

U.S. CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVISTS SUPPORT INDONESIAN TSUNAMI VICTIMS THROUGH ECA GRANT TO OHIO UNIVERSITY



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Department of State

Joby Taylor and Duraide Da'as, members of an ECA-funded inter-faith delegation of American civic and religious activists, assess the devastation in Aceh, Indonesia, March 22, 2005.

As the fourth and final phase of an ECA Office of Citizen Exchanges grant to Ohio University, an inter-faith team of ten American civic and religious activists visited Jakarta, Majalengka & Cirebon, West Java, and Aceh March 14-24, 2005, to support local Indonesian groups conducting inter-religious dialogue and crisis response efforts. The U.S. delegation held a national workshop on peer mediation for Indonesian alumni of previous exchanges in order to promote conflict management efforts in Indonesian schools. Delegation members also spoke publicly on the importance of interfaith volunteer efforts and on March 22 delivered aid packages to support tsunami relief efforts in Banda Aceh – a trip that opened the delegates' eyes to the extent of the devastation.

FORMER MANSFIELD FELLOW DESCRIBES DEVASTATION IN ACEH

Hundreds of cars were crumpled like paper balls. Large fishing ships remain slammed into buildings... In many areas, nothing higher than two feet stands.

— Alfred Nakatsuma, a U.S. government employee and former ECA Mansfield Fellow to Japan, describes images from his month in western Indonesia providing disaster relief following the Asian tsunamis.

PROGRAM ALUMNI DISCUSS TSUNAMI RELIEF EFFORTS LIVE ONLINE



Greg Gottlieb, Deputy Director, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, USAID, interacts with ECA program alumni gathered for a Q & A Live session in Jakarta, January 12, 2005.

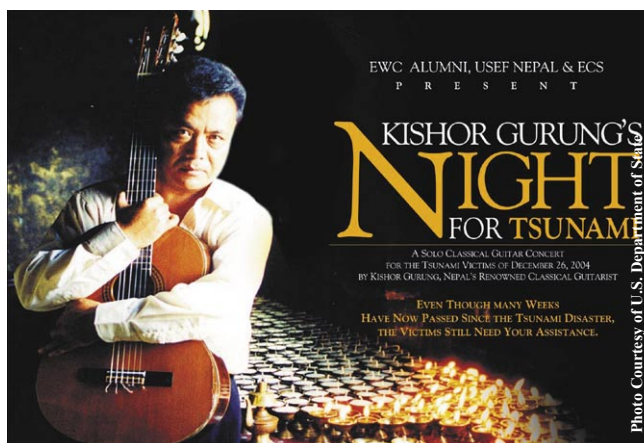
On January 12, 2005, the Indonesian commercial TV station, Lativi, with a viewership of 1.5 million people, featured 40 ECA alumni gathered at the Jakarta Fulbright Commission to participate in an alumni.state.gov Q & A Live session on tsunami relief efforts. These alumni are important Embassy contacts representing the media, academia, business, and Muslim NGOs. The session's featured guest was Gregg Gottlieb, Deputy Director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), who spoke about U.S. efforts and answered questions from the gathered alumni. He explained USAID's special efforts to respect local political sensitivities and discussed the unique role of the U.S. military — with its helicopters and other crucial equipment — at the start of any relief effort. Participants discussed long-term reconstruction efforts and the alumni made an impromptu agreement to establish a national university network to address Aceh's educational priorities.

INDONESIAN ALUMNI ORGANIZE RELIEF FOR ACEH

Forum Pesantren, an informal network created in December 2004 to link the 61 alumni of ECA's Strategic Communities exchange program for heads of *pesantren* (Indonesian Islamic boarding schools), joined with six other Indonesian NGOs to help their countrymen in Aceh who were hit especially hard by the Asian tsunami. The joint crisis center, dubbed "Of One Heart with Aceh (*Atjeh Sehati*)," contacted fellow surviving exchange program alumni in Aceh and agreed to serve as local assistance coordinator. Forum Pesantren sought donations of short-term material assistance (clothing, blankets, and funds), and sought long-term help such as trauma healing and post-disaster education. The Forum urged its member *pesantren* throughout Indonesia to assist orphans from Aceh and provide them with scholarships.

BENEFIT CONCERT REFLECTS ALUMNI INITIATIVE, GOODWILL

The ECA-supported East-West Center (EWC) Alumni Association worked with the U.S. Educational Foundation-Nepal to organize a benefit concert for victims of the December 26, 2004, Asian tsunamis. On March 18, 2005, Nepal's renowned classical guitarist Kishor Gurung played for more than 150 people. Gurung is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and a Fellow at the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii. The proceeds of \$1500 were donated to the East-West Center Tsunami Relief Fund of the University of Hawaii, to be matched by the East-West Center.



Classical guitarist Kishor Gurung performed at an East-West Center Alumni Association-sponsored benefit concert for victims of the Asian tsunamis.

For information on how to support ongoing reconstruction efforts in the tsunamis-affected countries, visit the White House - USA Freedom Corps Website at http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/content/about_usafc/newsroom/announcements_dynamic.asp?ID=853 or call the Center for International Disaster Information at (703) 276-1914.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS MAKE DISASTER RESPONSE A HIGH PRIORITY

“The United States is providing crucial aid not only on the ground in the region affected by the tsunami, but also through the long-term investment in strengthening natural disaster response systems in nations throughout the world,” said W. Charles Moore, Director of ECA’s Office of International Visitors. “The International Visitor Leadership Program is a dynamic and adaptable exchange program that is able to respond to current events and U.S. public diplomacy objectives,” he added.

New government disaster management units and task forces have been established in countries worldwide. In an ongoing effort, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is bringing a range of foreign leaders and professionals to the United States to examine disaster response policies and plans.

- Through the IVLP-Voluntary Visitor Division, four Members of Parliament in Sri Lanka visited Los Angeles and Honolulu, May 7-14, as participants in the project “Disaster Management,” to learn about emergency preparedness and disaster recovery programs, intergovernmental coordination, tsunami hazard mitigation, and earthquake research and risk assessment.
- Fourteen specialists in disaster relief from Australia, Bangladesh, India (2), Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Peoples Republic of China, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand participated in the multi-regional IVLP project, “Responding to Natural Disasters,” June 6-24, for an introduction to the cultural, geographic and ethnic



Dr. Charles McCreery, Director of the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, shows the log of calls made from the Center on December 26, 2004, to “Disaster Management” International Visitor Leadership Program participants (l to r) Muthu Sivalingam, John Amaratunga, English Language Officer Janice Drummond, and Wijedasa Rajapakshe, in May 2005.

diversity of America and to establish ties with their American counterparts.

- The IVLP multi-regional project in progress, “Humanitarian Responses to Crises and Disasters,” July 28 - August 18, 2005, includes twenty-two professionals from Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Peru, Slovenia, South Africa, St. Lucia, USIO Geneva, Trinidad & Tobago, Turkey, USEU Brussels, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

FORMER PRESIDENTS SPUR NEW FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS

Former Presidents Bush and Clinton have traveled and fundraised intensively on behalf of tsunami victims over the past months. One result: “Students from the region will...get the chance to apply for 75 scholarships to attend Texas A&M University and the University of Arkansas through a contribution to the Fulbright Commission. Those who receive the scholarships will major in subjects such as engineering, city planning and agriculture, in an effort to assist in rebuilding their home countries. It is estimated to take up to 20 years to rebuild the infrastructure in some of the affected countries.”

– *The Associated Press* (May 5, 2005, by Pam Easton)

The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) manages more than 30,000 exchanges annually, including the Fulbright Program and the International Visitor Leadership Program. Through a wide range of academic, professional, and cultural exchanges, ECA seeks to increase mutual understanding and respect between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. For more information, visit www.exchanges.state.gov.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Outreach, publishes *The Exchange* biweekly newsletter to highlight the scope of ECA’s mission, people, programs and partners. The occasional Special Edition will feature a specific theme.

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